

Review Article

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A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF VIRUDDHA AHARA

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, Ahara is regarded as one of the pivotal mainstays for healthy lifestyle. In order to maintain healthy life, it advocates the notion of consuming right kind of food that provides optimum nutrition and thus contributes to holistic well-being. Ayurveda describes the distinctive concept of Viruddha Ahara. Viruddha Ahara is defined as food or diet that mobilises and provokes the Dosha, but does not completely remove them from the body. Variety of food incompatibilities are listed in Ayurvedic literature, which are atypical in context to present era. But there are many new food incompatibilities unfolded lately which are frequently practiced nowadays in day-to-day life. Understanding of these food incompatibilities and their detrimental effects is need of hour now. The present study is aimed to explore the diverse types of Viruddha Ahara and their potential role in disease manifestation. The classic literature and various newer studies delineate that Viruddha Ahara produces ill effects by causing vitation of Dosha, depreciation of immune system and cellular metabolism and production of Ama (toxin) in the body. Viruddha Ahara may also cause inflammation at the molecular level. Fruitshakes, ice-cream with hot chocolates or hot Gulabjamuna, tea with garlic breads and milk with yoghurt are some of the newer incompatible food permutations that are widely used nowadays. Their frequent use may precipitate the manifestation of various digestive, metabolic and skin disorders. Better apprehension about Viruddha Ahara can help with better digestion, increased nutrient absorption, decreased toxin generation, effective weight management, and pave the path towards good health and vitality.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Ahara, Incompatible diet, Viruddha Ahara.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda's aim is to promote and maintain the health, strength and longevity of the healthy individual and to cure the disease. In Ayurveda, the Tridosha (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) are regarded as Tristambha or Tristhuna as they anchor the body. Their energies are believed to circulate in the body and govern physical, mental and emotional characteristics. Besides these three Dosha, there are three another ancillary entity opined in Ayurveda that additionally support the body. They are named as Travopastambha. The word Travopastambha is derived from two words Traya (three) and Upasthambha (supporting pillars). Ahara (Food), Nidra (Sleep) and Bhramacharya (Celibacy, i.e., regulated sexual conduct) act as Upastambha by supporting the main pillars (Tridosha) just as the small beams support the main beam of the house. Among these three, Ahara is the most important factor for sustenance of life. Ahara is said as Mahabhaishaja, means the great medicament. It is said to be extremely important for human health since it renders essential nutrients required to perform the functions of digestion and metabolism. Health as well as disease is reliant on Ahara. Proper diet, taken in proper manner can lead to better health or else can lead to diseases. In current scenario, the rules related to food and diet regimen have been compromised that adversely affect the overall health status. Therefore, it become essential to understand various types of food incompatibilities to reduce erroneous intake of food items in order to reduce burden of deteriorating health due to unhealthy food and diet. In this context, Ayurveda proposed a distinctive concept of Viruddha Ahara. Viruddha Ahara refers to

a diet that disrupts the state of equilibrium among the bodily elements. Intake of Viruddha Ahara may cause the aggravation of Dosha and produce many diseases. So, it is the need of hour to explore the concept of Viruddha Ahara for better apprehension of its diverse types and their role in disease pathogenesis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food)

A kind of food which does Doshotklesha (exacerbation of Dosha and dislodgement from their inherit sites) but does not eliminate or expel them from the body is known as Viruddha Ahara. Such incompatible food remains antagonistic to the Dhatu. ^{2,3}

Types of Viruddha Ahara

According to Acharya Charaka⁴

Acharya Charaka has classified Viruddha Ahara into 18 types which are briefed as follows:

Desha Viruddha: Consumption of food items that are incompatible with a particular place or land region is known as Desha Viruddha. For example:

Intake of Ruksha (dry) and Tikshna (sharp or penetrating) substances in the Maru Desha (deserted places).

Consuming Snigdha (unctuous) and Sheeta (cold) substances in Anoopa Desha (marshy places).

Kala Viruddha: Intake of food items having similar properties to that of time or season is known as Kala Viruddha. For example: Consuming Katu (pungent) and Ushna (hot) substances in Ushna Kala (summer season).

Consuming Sheeta (cold) and Ruksha (dry) substances in Sheeta Kala (winter season).

Agni Viruddha: Eating food items that are not in accordance with an individual's Agni (digestive fire) is known as Agni Viruddha, For example:

Consuming Guru (heavy) Ahara when Agni is Manda (dull). Intake of Laghu (light) Ahara when Agni is Tikshana (sharp or intense).

Matra Viruddha: Consuming food items that are nutritionally incompatible when mixed in equal proportion is known as Matra Viruddha. For example:

Consuming Ghrita (clarified butter) and Madhu (honey) in equal quantity.

Intake of an equal amount of rainwater and Madhu.

Satmya Viruddha: Consuming food items that are incompatible with the body's suitability is known as Satmya Viruddha. For example:

Intake of Sheeta (cold) and Madhura (sweet) substances by someone who is used to Ushna (hot) and Katu (pungent) substances.

Dosha Viruddha: Intake of food items having similar properties to Dosha but incompatible to the individual and cause Dosha Dushti (vitiation of Dosha) is known as Dosha Viruddha. For example:

Intake of Ruksha Ahara by Vataja Prakriti person.

Use of Snigdha Ahara by Kaphaja Prakriti individual.

Sanskara Viruddha: Consumption of such food items which become harmful due to processing is considered as Sanskara Viruddha. For example:

Consuming parrot meat that is cooked inside Eranda (Ricinis communis) faggot.

Intake of heated Madhu is considered to be like poison for the body.

Veerya Viruddha: Simultaneous intake of such food items whose Veerya is antagonist to each other is known as Veerya Viruddha. For example:

Intake of fish with milk.

Koshtha Viruddha: Consuming food items which are incompatible with nature of Koshtha (bowel habits) is known as Koshtha Viruddha. For example:

Intake of mild purgative drug in less quantity by a person having Krura Koshtha (costive bowel).

Administration of strong purgative drug in large quantity to a person having Mridu Koshtha (tender bowel)

Avastha Viruddha: Ingestion of food items without considering the existing condition of body is known as Avastha Viruddha. For example:

Intake of Vata aggravating food by an individual following physical exercise, sexual activity, or exhaustion.

Ingestion of Kapha aggravating food by an individual after slumber or doziness.

Krama Viruddha: Intake of food items in an invalid order is known as Krama Viruddha. For example:

Eating food without clearance of bowel and urination.

Consumption of food when there is no appetite or when the hunger is too much aggravated

Parihara Viruddha: Intake of food items which are contraindicated is known as Parihara Viruddha. For example: Consuming hot things after eating pork.

Upachara Viruddha: Eating food items that become incompatible after taking a specific diet or therapy is known as Upachara Viruddha. For example:

Intake of cold substance after taking Ghee.

Paka Viruddha: Consumption of food items which are not properly cooked is known as Paka Viruddha. For example: Uncooked, partly cooked, over cooked and partly burnt food.

Samyoga Viruddha: Consumption of food items that become incompatible when combine with each other is known as Samyoga Viruddha. Various examples of Samyoga Viruddha are mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1: Examples of Samyoga Viruddha

Food Item	Incompatible Combination	
Dugdha	Lakucha (Artocarpus lacucha),	
	Chilichima (fish), leaves of Rohinika	
	(Gmelina arborea), Pushkara (Inula	
	racemosa), Kadali Phala (Musa	
	paradisiaca), wild roots, Meat (Pork,	
	Dog, etc.)	
Madhu	Lakucha fruit, leaves of Rohinika	
	(Gmelina arborea), Kakamachi	
	(Solanum nigrum), Sharkara (wine	
	prepared with sugar), Maireya (wine	
	prepared with dates)	
Guda	Kakamachi (Solanum nigrum),	
	Lakucha Phala (Artocarpus lacucha)	
Ghrita/Soup of Masha	Lakucha Phala (Artocarpus lacucha)	
Dadhi/Takra/Talaphala	Kadali Phala (Musa paradisiaca)	
Pippali/Maricha	Kakamachi (Solanum nigrum)	

Hridaya Viruddha: Intake of food items which are not pleasant to the consumer is known as Hridaya Viruddha.

Sampad Viruddha: Consumption of food items which are not having their inherent qualities is known as Sampad Viruddha. For example:

Consumption of food substance those are not mature, over matured or putrefied.

Vidhi Viruddha: Intake of food items that are not according to the rules of eating is known as Vidhi Viruddha. For example: Intake of food items in public place or open place.

According to Sushruta Samhita

Samyoga Viruddha⁵

Drinking of hot water with honey.

Consumption of Kakamachi (Solanum nigrum) with Pippali (Piper longum) and Maricha (Piper nigrum).

Eating of curd with Kukkuta (chicken).

Eating of uncooked meat with Pitta (bile), Sura (wine), and Khichdi.

Intake of Papadi of Tila (sesamum cake) with Sauviraka (a sour gruel).

Karma Viruddha6

Intake of meat of Kapinjala (grey partridge), Mayur (peacock), Lava (gull), Tittira (francolin), and Godha (iguana) which are cooked in Eranda (*Ricinus communis*) or Daruharidra (*Berberis aristata*) wood fire or cooked with Eranda oil.

Consumption of Ghrita that has been stored in a Kamsya (bronze) pot for ten days.

Intake of honey with hot drinks in the summer.

Mana Viruddha⁷

Intake of honey and water or Ghrita in equal quantities. Consumption of two different kinds of Sneha in equal quantities.

Rasa – **Veerya** – **Vipaka Viruddha**⁸ - Examples of Rasa-Veerya-Vipaka Viruddha are tabulated in Table 2.

With regard to varieties of Viruddha Ahara, substantial data is available in the body of Ayurvedic literature. Many of the incompatible food combinations and permutations as listed in Sushruta Samhita and Charaka Samhita have become obsolete as they are not usually practiced nowadays. Therefore, it is an absolute need of the hour to probe and delve into such newer food incompatibilities which are commonly used in this modern age as per Ayurvedic perspective. Some newer prevailing incompatible foods which are commonly practiced in present era are listed in Table 3.

Table 2: Examples of Rasa-Veerya-Vipaka Viruddha

Rasa Viruddha	Veerya Viruddha	Vipaka Viruddha
Madhura - Lavana/Amla/Katu/ Kashaya/Tikta	Madhura - Lavana/ Amla/Katu	Madhura - Kashaya/ Tikta /Katu
Amla - Kashaya/Katu/Lavana/ Tikta	Amla - Tikta/Kashaya	Amla - Katu/Tikta/ Kashaya
Lavana - Tikta/Katu/Kashaya	Lavana - Tikta/ Kashaya	Lavana - Katu/Tikta/ Kashaya
Katu - Tikta/Kashaya	Katu - Tikta/ Kashaya	-
Tikta - Kashava		

Table 3: List of Common Incompatible Foods used in Present Scenario

Type of Viruddha	Example (in present context)
Desha Viruddha	Use of yogurt, cheese, excessive rice or sea food in marshy places
	Intake of spicy food in dessert or arid regions.
Kala Viruddha	Intake of ice cream, milkshake, cold drinks, frozen foods in winter.
	Use of excessive tea, coffee, spices, alcohol in summer.
Agni Viruddha	Consuming popcorn in excessive hungry condition.
	Consuming sweets, Guda and meat in less hungry condition.
Matra Viruddha	Excessive intake of protein rich diets and synthetic protein powders, etc.
Satmya Viruddha	Intake of sweet and cold food items by a person who used to eat pungent and hot food items.
	Intake of meat by vegetarian person.
Dosha Viruddha	Consumption of dry, roasted food by Vata Prakriti individual.
	Intake of tea, coffee, spicy food by Pitta Prakriti individual.
	Intake of yogurt, black gram by Kapha Prakriti individual.
Sanskara Viruddha	Heated honey (honey is strongly heated before packaging)
	Eating deep fried potatoes, honey chilli potatoes, etc.
	Boiling of butter milk.
	Intake of reheated food items - French fries, Samosa, etc. are prepared by reheating oil again and again.
Veerya Viruddha	Drinking of cold fruit juice together with hot milk or coffee.
	Eating ice-creams with hot chocolate.
	Intake of ice-cream with hot Gulabjamuna, etc.
	Intake of seafood with milk.
Koshtha Viruddha	Intake of barbecue food and baked food by a person suffering from constipation.
Avastha Viruddha	Intake of Ghee by sleepy, lazy individual.
	Consumption of alcohol by labourers and hard workers.
Krama Viruddha	Taking dessert at the end of meal.
	Intake of bitter and pungent food substances at the start of meals.
	Consumption of food before the earlier food is digested or in absence of proper appetite and late meals after intense
	hunger.
	Consumption of curd at night.
Parihara Viruddha	Drinking of cold drinks after eating Samosa.
	Intake of juice, ice creams, alcohol after hot spicy meal.
Upachara Viruddha	Drinking cold water after taking Ghee and steam bath.
Paka Viruddha	Intake of food items which are cooked in microwave, cooker, etc.
~	Intake of half or over cooked/baked food.
Samyoga Viruddha	Intake of strawberry milkshake, banana milkshake, mango milkshake, pineapple milkshake, etc.
	Intake of milk with fish.
	Intake of green tea or black tea with milk.
	Milk and yoghurt interaction.
** · 1	Intake of tea and garlic.
Hridaya Viruddha	Healthy food items become unpleasant for the heart when someone is overcome with jealousy, fear, or anger.
	Intake of bitter food like bitter gourd, decoctions, etc.
C	Table of an accord add and find it.
Sampad Viruddha	Intake of non-seasonal/ cold stored food items like mango, watermelon, vegetables, etc.
	Intake of over ripened mangoes, banana, etc.
17: JL: 17: 1 11	Intake of food items/ fruits which haven't fulfilled their original taste.
Vidhi Viruddha	Eating food items while laughing, speaking and watching television, etc.

DISCUSSION

The Viruddha Ahara concept has been discussed by Ayurvedic Acharya in different contexts. Though different Viruddha Ahara have been mentioned by the Acharya, but the goal has always been to avoid Viruddha Ahara, consume the ideal foods to maintain the health. In present era, the exponential rise is observed in the prevalence of lifestyle disorders which is attributed to the frequent intake of incompatible food by today's generation. There is a conventional misconception about the pathogenic potential of the Viruddha Ahara that only the regular use will result into disease manifestation and sporadic use will not cause any disease. Instead, its pathogenicity depends upon different factors like Agni, Bala, Kala, etc. Among these factors, Agni is the most important that determine the fate of use of Viruddha Ahara as deranged state of Agni is mainly accountable for disease manifestation. Ahara consumed in variety with different Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka generate overload on Agni and obstruct the enzyme system. This results in the production of toxins. Further, these toxins interfere the health and manifest various diseases in the body.

Role of Viruddha Ahara in Vyadhi Utpatti

When Viruddha Ahara is ingested, it can sometimes cause the disease to manifest directly, but more often than not, it provokes vitiation of Dosha and manifestation of Ama in the body which ultimately leads to the disease manifestation.

When it comes to the Dosha, they must be in balance in order to maintain the health and wellness of the body. In their physiological state, Dosha are not capable of initiating the manifestation of the disease in the body. Nevertheless, the intake of Viruddha Ahara triggers their quiescent morbific potential by disturbing the harmonious interactions between different inherent Guna of Tridosha. Besides Dosha vitiation, Viruddha Ahara also impairs the status of Agni and thus causes Agnimandhya. Agnimandhya further precipitates the formation of Ama Dosha in the body which is considered as Visha due to its virulent nature.

Diseases caused by Viruddha Ahara

Aadhmana (Abdominal distention), Atisara (Diarrhoea), Ajeerna (Indigestion), Amlapitta (Acidity), Grahani (Irritable Bowel Syndrome), Shotha (Swelling or oedema), Jwara (Fever), Pandu Roga (Anemia), Ama (Endogenous toxin), Kilasa (Leucoderma), Kushtha (Various skin disorders), etc. 10,11

Food incompatibilities in present scenario

Combining foods that aren't compatible can have harmful effects on growth hormone, the immunological system, cellular metabolism, and dehydroepiandrosterone sulphate (DHEAS). Lately, trophology (a science of food combination) emerges as a new field of study that delineates the concept about the combination of basic categories of the food.

Banana and Cow Milk

An experimental study on repeated administration of banana and cow milk combination showed statistically significant increase in SGOT, serum urea level, cholesterol, triglycerides and HDL and significant decrease in LDL level, food intake, faecal wet weight, faecal water and food conversion ratio. Histological findings of the study such as mild to moderate myocarditis, diffused micro fatty changes in liver and mild to moderate increase in the white pulp in spleen are suggestive of some toxicological implications of the combination.¹²

Protein rich foods with starch and carbohydrates

The science of trophology advocates that proteins should not be ingested with starches or carbohydrates. This is because starch requires an alkali medium for digestion. When proteins and carbohydrates are consumed together, their absorption will be delayed. ¹³

In similar fashion, intake of citric fruits together with sugar can hamper the digestive action of ptyalin (salivary amylase) and pepsin. This results in the decreased secretion of saliva that ultimately impedes the overall process of digestion. Insufficient salivary amylase also withers the digestion of starch in the stomach. Fats should also be avoided when eating foods high in protein since they reduce the amount of pepsin and stop the secretion of digestive juices and hydrochloric acid.

Green tea or black tea and milk

The heart benefits greatly from the flavonoids called catechins found in tea. Caseins, a class of milk proteins, interact with the tea when milk is added, lowering the concentration of catechins in the tea. Hence, green or black tea and milk should not be taken together. ¹⁴

Milk and yoghurt interaction

The use of milk and yoghurt together can lead to the precipitation of milk in the stomach. This may irritate the gastric mucosa and induce vomiting. So, avoid the use of milk and yoghurt together.¹⁵

Tea and garlic

Coumarins are anticoagulant chemicals found in tea. They may increase the risk of bleeding when used with garlic as the latter has anticlotting properties. Therefore, better to avoid intake of tea with garlic. ¹⁶

Intake of Grapefruit juice and pomegranate juice after medication

The cytochrome P450 3A4 enzyme is responsible for metabolism of many drugs. Both grapefruit juice and pomegranate juice affect the drug metabolism as they inhibit the action of this enzyme. This raises the levels of administered drugs in the blood. Taking these two juices together may synergize the above action.¹⁷

CONCLUSION

Viruddha Ahara, an idiosyncratic concept of Ayurveda provide important insights into how incautious eating can debilitate the holistic well-being. Understanding the importance of food compatibility can help with better digestion, increased nutrient absorption and assimilation, decreased toxin generation, better weight management, and increased energy levels in this modern epoch, where diet-related health issues are becoming more prevalent. In contrast, the perpetual breach of the dietary rules and periodic use of Viruddha Ahara can lead to several hazardous diseases unknowingly. Being cognizant of detrimental nature of Viruddha Ahara can pave the path towards better health and vitality and help in reducing the disease burden associated with the intake of Viruddha Ahara.

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